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THE
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MAUD &
OTHER
POEMS
BY
ALFRED
LORD
TENNYSON

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MAUD; AND OTHER POEMS

MAUD

I

I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood, Maud
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with
blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror
of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers
'Death.'

2

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body
was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O
God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted
into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when
he fell.

3

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a
vast speculation had fail'd,

A

Maud And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever
wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a
broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands
drove thro' the air.

4

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair
were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by
a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock
on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the
shuddering night.

5

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we
are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me
be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate
and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left
us flaccid and drain'd.

6

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace?
we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is
not its own;

And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it Maud
better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on
his own hearthstone?

7

But these are the days of advance, the works
of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a
tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and
that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing
the sword.

8

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither
hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face
as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows?
we are ashes and dust.

9

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the
days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled to-
gether, each sex, like swine.
When only the ledger lives, and when only not
all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company
forges the wine.

Maud

10

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the
ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the
trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the
poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very
means of life,

11

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villain-
ous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the
moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last
gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson
lights.

12

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for
a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of
children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by
land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a
hundred thrones.

13

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder
round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-
decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would
leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his
cheating yardwand, home.—

14

What! am I raging alone as my father raged
in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself
down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made,
nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched
swindler's lie?

15

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love*
in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false
haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought
he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as
he used to rave.

Maud

16

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick
of the moor and the main.

Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever
come to me here?

O, having the nerves of motion as well as the
nerves of pain,

Were it not wise if I fled from the place and
the pit and the fear?

17

There are workmen up at the Hall: they are
coming back from abroad;

The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of
a millionaire:

I have heard, I know not whence, of the
singular beauty of Maud;

I play'd with the girl when a child; she
promised then to be fair.

18

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles
and childish escapes,

Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy
of the Hall,

Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my
father dangled the grapes,

Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-
faced darling of all,—

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She
may bring me a curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will
let me alone.

Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether
woman or man be the worse.

I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil
may pipe to his own.

II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I
may find it at last!

It will never be broken by Maud, she has
neither savour nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when
her carriage past,

Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where
is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not
to be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it
had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's
defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,
too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a
sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart free, with the least
little touch of spleen.

Maud

III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly
meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly
was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead
on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a
gloom profound ;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a
transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as
pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me with-
out a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half
the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could
bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark
garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung
shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd
down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer,
and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his
grave.

IV

I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded
 lime
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore
 cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful
 season bland,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of
 a softer clime,
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent
 of sea,
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of
 the land ?

2

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how
 quiet and small !
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip,
 scandal, and spite ;
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many
 lies as a Czar ;
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock,
 glimmers the Hall ;
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass
 like a light ;
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my
 leading star !

Maud

3

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled
 head of the race?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to
 her brother I bow'd:
 I bow'd to his lady sister as she rode by on the
 moor;
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her
 beautiful face.
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in
 being so proud;
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am
 nameless and poor.

4

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to
 slander and steal;
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a
 stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its
 way:
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no
 preacher can heal;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow
 spear'd by the shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a
 world of plunder and prey.

5

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty
 fair in her flower;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an
 unseen hand at a game

That pushes us off from the board, and others **Maud**
ever succeed?

Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here
for an hour;

We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at
a brother's shame;

However we brave it out, we men are a little
breed.

6

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master
of Earth,

For him did his high sun flame, and his river
billowing ran,

And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's
crowning race.

As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe
for his birth,

So many a million of ages have gone to the
making of man:

He now is first, but is he the last? is he not
too base?

7

The man of science himself is fonder of glory,
and vain,

An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded
and poor;

The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into
folly and vice.

I would not marvel at either, but keep a tem-
perate brain;

Maud For not to desire or admire, if a man could
learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a
garden of spice.

8

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid
by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God
will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world
is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if
a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or
with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made
it will guide.

9

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet wood-
land ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace
be my lot,
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the
hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that
are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he
heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud
of poisonous flies.

IO

Maud

And most of all would I flee from the cruel
madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measure-
less ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all
unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image
in marble above ;
Your father is ever in London, you wander
about at your will ;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the
lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall !
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call !
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

2

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,

Maud And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
 Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
 Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot
 die,
 Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and
 mean,
 And myself so languid and base.

3

Silence, beautiful voice !
 Be still, for you only trouble the mind
 With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
 A glory I shall not find.
 Still ! I will hear you no more,
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
 But to move to the meadow and fall before
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale,
 No sun, but a wannish glare
 In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
 And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
 Caught and cuff'd by the gale :
 I had fancied it would be fair.

2

Whom but Maud should I meet
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd

On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so
sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

3

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

5

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?

Maud

Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

7

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good ?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half turn'd to stone.

9

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand ?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

Maud

10

I have play'd with her when a child ;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ay well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

1

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where ?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

2

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me ;
' Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

3

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night ?

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me ;
' Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty : so let it be.'

VIII

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone ;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone ;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own ;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone ;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moorland,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.

Maud

There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone :
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

2

Maud

What, has he found my jewel out ?
 For one of the two that rode at her side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he :
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
 Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ?
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3

Last week came one to the county town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well :
 This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
 Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
 This huckster put down war ! can he tell
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence ?
 Put down the passions that make earth Hell !
 Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear ;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

Maud

4

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy !
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

5

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

6

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be !

XI

I

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet ;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

2

Let the sweet heavens endure,
 Not close and darken above me
 Before I am quite quite sure
 That there is one to love me ;
 Then let come what come may
 To a life that has been so sad,
 I shall have had my day.

XII

I

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 When twilight was falling,
 Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
 They were crying and calling.

2

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;
 And I, who else, was with her,
 Gathering woodland lilies,
 Myriads blow together.

3

Birds in our wood sang
 Ringing thro' the valleys,
 Maud is here, here, here
 In among the lilies.

Maud

4

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately ;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

5

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favour !
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

6

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

7

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?
One is come to woo her.

8

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII

Maud

I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

2

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

3

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?

Maud For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue ;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin :
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

4

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn ;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate ;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

2

Maud

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carved gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate :
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost to
glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to
my side,
There were but a step to be made.

3

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold ;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood ;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;

Maud But I look'd, and round, all round the house I
 beheld
The death-white curtain drawn ;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but
 sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the
 sleep of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
 And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one else,
 Then some one else may have much to fear ;
But if *I* be dear to some one else,
 Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI

I

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week :

But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

Maud

2

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

3

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

Maud

XVII

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships ;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West ;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

2

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once
more ;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

3

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,

Maud And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom
she came.

4

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

5

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl,

6

Maud

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,
 And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself
 more dear.'

8

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses play ;
 But now by this my love has closed her sight
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden day.

c

Maud May nothing there her maiden grace affright !
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell ;
It is but for a little space I go :
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so :
Let all be well, be well.

XIX

I

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

2

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine :
For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

3

I trust that I did not talk
 To gentle Maud in our walk
 (For often in lonely wanderings
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things),
 But I trust that I did not talk,
 Not touch on her father's sin :
 I am sure I did but speak
 Of my mother's faded cheek
 When it slowly grew so thin,
 That I felt she was slowly dying
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :
 For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing
 A world of trouble within !

4

And Maud too, Maud was moved
 To speak of the mother she loved
 As one scarce less forlorn,
 Dying abroad and it seems apart
 From him who had ceased to share her heart,
 And ever mourning over the feud,
 The household Fury sprinkled with blood
 By which our houses are torn :
 How strange was what she said,
 When only Maud and the brother
 Hung over her dying bed—
 That Maud's dark father and mine
 Had bound us one to the other,
 Betrothed us over their wine,

Maud On the day when Maud was born ;
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
 Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
 Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

5

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :
 And none of us thought of a something beyond,
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;
 And I was cursing them and my doom,
 And letting a dangerous thought run wild
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
 Of foreign churches—I see her there,
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
 To be friends, to be reconciled !

6

But then what a flint is he !
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
 I find whenever she touch'd on me
 This brother had laugh'd her down,
 And at last, when each came home,
 He had darken'd into a frown,
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak
 To me, her friend of the years before ;
 And this was what had redden'd her cheek
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

7

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

8

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

9

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;

Maud O then, what then shall I say?—
 If ever I *should* forget,
 May God make me more wretched
 Than ever I have been yet!

IO

So now I have sworn to bury
 All this dead body of hate,
 I feel so free and so clear
 By the loss of that dead weight,
 That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
 Fantastically merry;
 But that her brother comes, like a blight
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,
 Strange, that *I* tried to-day
 To beguile her melancholy;
 The Sultan, as we name him,—
 She did not wish to blame him—
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly:
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?

Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer ;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

Maud

2

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near ;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

3

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

4

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,

Maud

And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over ;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea ;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odour and colour, ' Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

i

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,

Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

Maud

2

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

3

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon ;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

4

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

Maud

5

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I swore to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

6

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

8

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;

But the rose was awake all night for your sake, Maud
 Knowing your promise to me ;
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

9

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one ;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

10

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
 She is coming, my life, my fate ;
 The red rose cries, ' She is near, she is near ;'
 And the white rose weeps, ' She is late ;'
 The larkspur listens, ' I hear, I hear ;'
 And the lily whispers, ' I wait.'

11

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed ;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead ;
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

Maud

XXIII

I

‘The fault was mine, the fault was mine’—
Why am I sitting here so stunn’d and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap’d on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribb’d hollow behind the wood,
And thunder’d up into Heaven the Christless
code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem’d to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
 'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly !'
 Then glided out of the joyous wood
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
 A cry for a brother's blood :
 It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die,
 till I die.

2

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with delug-
ing storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous
worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

XXIV

I

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,

Maud

Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

2

What is it ? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

3

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world ?

4

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

5

Maud

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever rose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud ?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

6

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;
An old song vexes my ear ;
But that of Lamech is mine.

7

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still ;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

Maud

8

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by !
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

9

Who knows if he be dead ?
Whether I need have fled ?
Am I guilty of blood ?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea !
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me !
Me and my harmful love go by ;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

XXV

Courage, poor heart of stone !
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone :
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply :
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

XXVI

I

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again !

2

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

D

Maud

3

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee ;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

4

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

5

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies ;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

6

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls ;

Maud

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet ;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings ;
In a moment we shall meet ;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

7

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye ?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled ;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

8

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about,
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Maud

9

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide ;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

10

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same ;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

11

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

12

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,

Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

Maud

13

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be ;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me :
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

XXVII

I

Dead, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,

Maud And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so ;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go ;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man ;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are
gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of
the dead ;
There is none that does his work, not one ;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

3

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4

Maud

Nothing but idiot gabble !
 For the prophecy given of old
 And then not understood,
 Has come to pass as foretold ;
 Nor let any man think for the public good,
 But babble, merely for babble.
 For I never whisper'd a private affair
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,
 But I heard it shouted at once from the top of
 the house ;
 Everything came to be known :
 Who told *him* we were there ?

5

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he
 used to lie ;
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown
 whelp to crack ;
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

6

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;
 I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
 But I know that he lies and listens mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes, poor
 souls !
 It is all used up for that.

Maud

7

Tell him now : she is standing here at my head ;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
 He may take her now ; for she never speaks
 her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not of us, as I divine ;
 She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

8

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes :
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride ;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

9

But what will the old man say ?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;
 Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse in the pit ?

IO

Maud

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

II

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

XXVIII

I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little
thing :
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year

Maud When the face of night is fair on the dewy
 downs,
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
 That like a silent lightning under the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of
 the blest,
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming
 wars—
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have
 rest,
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's
 breast.

2

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear
 delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes
 so fair,
 That had been in a weary world my one thing
 bright;
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my
 despair
 When I thought that a war would arise in
 defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient
 height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,

And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase, Maud
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no
more.

3

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure
and true),
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my
breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and
shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;
And hail once more to the banner of battle
unroll'd !
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall
weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring
claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant
liar ;

Maud And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid
names,
And noble thought be freër under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over
and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic
deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress,
flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

5

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like
a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we
are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the
better mind ;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at
the ill ;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with
my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom
assign'd.

THE BROOK;

AN IDYL

‘HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the The Brook
East

And he for Italy—too late—too late :
One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could
make

The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish’d then or then ; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch’d
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev’n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him ; for “ O brook,” he
says,

“ O babbling brook,” says Edmund in his rhyme,
“ Whence come you ? ” and the brook, why
not ? replies.

The Brook

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

‘Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river
meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

‘But Philip chatter'd more than brook or
bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught

His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass. The Brook

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel.

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,

The Brook Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
 Stuck ; and he clamour'd from a casement,
 "run"

To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
 "Run, Katie !" Katie never ran : she moved
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it ? less of sentiment than sense
 Had Katie ; not illiterate ; neither one
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd.
 Why ?

What cause of quarrel ? None, she said, no
 cause ;

James had no cause : but when I prest the cause,
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James ?
 I said.

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from
 mine,

And sketching with her slender-pointed foot
 Some figure like a wizard's pentagram
 On garden gravel, let my query pass
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
 If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
 But evermore her father came across
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him
 short ;

And James departed vext with him and her." The Brook
How could I help her? "Would I—was it
wrong?"

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half hour, and let him talk to me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made towards us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his
dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they
were:

Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
"That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,

The Brook And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He gave them line : and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something
more,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its
price ;
He gave them line : and how by chance at
last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

‘Then, while I breathed in sight of haven,
he,
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,
And ran thro’ all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so
We turn’d our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as
long
As when they follow’d us from Philip’s door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content The Brook
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a style
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind

The Brook Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
 A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
 Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low
 breath

Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;
 And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
 Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within :
 Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the
 farm?'

'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little :
 pardon me ;

What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That
 were strange.

What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That
 is my name.'

'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,
 till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.

Then looking at her ; 'Too happy, fresh and
 fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best
 bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your name
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we
 came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.

Am I so like her? so they said on board.
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
 My brother James is in the harvest-field :
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in !’

The
 Letters

THE LETTERS

1

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom’d the stagnant air,
 I peer’d athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A band of pain across my brow ;
 ‘Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow.’

2

I turned and humm’d a bitter song
 That mock’d the wholesome human heart,
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only meant to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colours I approved.

The
Letters

3

She took the little ivory chest,
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,
 And gave my letters back to me.
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

4

She told me all her friends had said ;
 I raged against the public liar ;
 She talked as if her love were dead,
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 ' No more of love ; your sex is known :
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,
 The woman cannot be believed.

5

' Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell
 (And women's slander is the worst),
 And you, whom once I loved so well,
 ' Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—
 Like torrents from a mountain source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

6

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapour-braided blue.
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE
DUKE OF WELLINGTON

I

BURY the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore ?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

3

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow ;
The last great Englishman is low.

4

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that
blew !
Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen
no more.

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

5

All is over and done :
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds :
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear had heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

6

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd
guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and
with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
rest?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms,
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and over-
 threw.
 So great a soldier taught us there,

Ode on
 the Death
 of the
 Duke of
 Wellington

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

7

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought and kept it
ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;

O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the
soul

Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs,
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be
just.

But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts ;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;
Who let the turbid stream of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
Who never spoke against a foe ;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

8

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outred
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;

Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from
shame

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

9

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see :
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea

Ode on
the Death
of the
Duke of
Wellington

Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's
ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs
and tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

The Daisy

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road ;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bay's, the peacock's neck in hue ;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

The Daisy Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;
But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

The Daisy Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
 A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
 One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
 And up the snowy Splugen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit
 I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
 And now it tells of Italy.
 O love, we two shall go no longer
 To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
 Whose crying is a cry for gold:
 Yet here to-night in this dark city,
 When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
 This nurseling of another sky
 Still in the little book you lent me,
 And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
 The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
 The bitter east, the misty summer
 And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
 Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
 Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
 My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,
 God-father, come and see your boy :
 Your presence will be sun in winter,
 Making the little one leap for joy.

To the
 Rev. F. D.
 Maurice

For, being of that honest few,
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,
 Should eighty-thousand college-councils
 Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
 At you, so careful of the right,
 Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
 (Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
 I watch the twilight falling brown
 All round a careless-order'd garden
 Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
 But honest talk and wholesome wine,
 And only hear the magpie gossip
 Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
 To break the blast of winter, stand ;
 And further on, the hoary Channel
 Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

To the
Rev. F. D.
Maurice

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL

I

O WELL for him whose will is strong ! Will
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :
For him nor moves the loud world's random
mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

2

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still !
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT
BRIGADE

The
Charge of
the Light
Brigade

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

2

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die,
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

3

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

4

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

The
Charge of
the Light
Brigade

5

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

6

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Lady Clara
Vere de
Vere

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 You put strange memories in my head.
 Not thrice your branching limes have blown
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
 Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
 A great enchantress you may be ;
 But there was that across his throat
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara
 Vere de
 Vere

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 When thus he met his mother's view,
 She had the passions of her kind,
 She spake some certain truths of you.
 Indeed I heard one bitter word
 That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
 Her manners had not that repose
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 There stands a spectre in your hall :
 The guilt of blood is at your door :
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
 You held your course without remorse,
 To make him trust his modest worth,
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
 From yon blue heavens above us bent
 The grand old gardener and his wife
 Smile at the claims of long descent.

Lady Clara
Vere de
Vere

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clare Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and towers :
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If Time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The
Blackbird

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park :
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry :
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,

You ask
me why

The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Of old sat
freedom on
the heights

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixèd poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

Love thou But pamper not a hasty time,
 thy land Nor feed with crude imaginings
 The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
 That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
 To weakness, neither hide the ray
 From those, not blind, who wait for day,
 Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly
 Before her to whatever sky
 Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :
 But gentle words are always gain :
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
 Of pension, neither count on praise :
 It grows to guerdon after-days :
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
 Not master'd by some modern term ;
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
 With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
 Set in all lights by many minds,
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Love thou
thy land

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Love thou Of many changes, aptly join'd,
thy land Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boasting words, we said,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armèd foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

The Goose

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together ;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He uttered rhyme and reason,
'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbours ;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied ;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

The Goose

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder :
But ah ! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

' A quinsy choke thy cursed note ! '
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
' Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning ;
' So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder ;

The Epic

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger !'

THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas
gone,

Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer
edge,

I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith

The Epic Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his
hand

On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that
way

At college : but another which you had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank,
'he flung

His epic of King Arthur in the fire !'
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :
God knows—he has a mint of reasons : ask.
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said
Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times ?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times ; and why should any man
Remodel models rather than the life ?
And these twelve books of mine (to speak the
truth)

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.'
'But I,'

Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this
hearth

And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse

That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ; *Morte*
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame *D'Arthur*
 When we were Freshmen : then at my request
 He brought it ; and the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,
 King Arthur : then, because his wound was
 deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

Morte
D'Arthur

I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest
how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :
But now delay not : take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle meer :
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
' It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping
down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
For all the haft twinkled with diamond studs,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long,
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and
pale :

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the meer.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;

Morte
D'Arthur

Morte
D'Arthur

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
‘And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many
men.

What good should follow this, if this were
done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, “King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden basis of the hills.”

So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame were
lost.’

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
‘What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?’

Morte
D'Arthur

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee
hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great
brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in
an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Morte
D'Arthur

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him

Three times, and drew him under in the meer.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath :

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him

Three times, and drew him under in the meer.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard :

'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words, Morte
D'Arthur

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the
King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick,
Quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a
goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by
these

Morte
D'Arthur

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from
them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the
barge,'

And to the barge they came. There those
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white

And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with
dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Morte
 D'Arthur

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that
 led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world;
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
 'The old order changeth, yielding place to
 new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have
 done

May He within Himself make pure! but thou—
 If thou shouldest never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
 by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let
 thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,

Morte
D'Arthur

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the meer the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and
fell:

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!'
but we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness— Morte
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work; D'Arthur
 I know not : but we sitting, as I said,
 The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
 'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :
 And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
 Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
 Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,
 'Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind
 Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair ;'
 And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come
 With all good things, and war shall be no more.'
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-
 morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ; OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
 When I and Eustace from the city went

The
Gardener's
Daughter

To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules ;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little ;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing ! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life ? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
'When will *you* paint like this ?' and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)
'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, un-
perceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those
eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
The Gardener's daughter : trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.'
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.

The
Gardener's
Daughter

News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells,
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock ;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad
stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen ; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ? Where
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot ? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged
seeds,

The
Gardener's
Daughter

Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large
cloud
Drew downward: but all else of heaven was
pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And
now,
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its
sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of
these,)
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway,
stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and
right,

The
Gardener's
Daughter

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;
The redcap whistled, and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
'Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you
they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song ?
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?
And would they praise the heavens for what
they have ?'

And I made answer, 'Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my
thought,

And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.

The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the
house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, 'Look ! look !' Before he ceased
I turn'd,

The
Gardener's
Daughter

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern
rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's gale had
caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.

A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—

Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering
down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have
danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common
ground!

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a
Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance
turn'd

Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her:

‘ Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull’d,
Were worth a hundred kisses press’d on lips
Less exquisite than thine.’

The
Gardener's
Daughter

She look’d : but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess’d
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning,
wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr’d her lips
For some sweet answer, tho’ no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho’ I linger’d there
Till every daisy slept, and Love’s white star
Beam’d thro’ the thicken’d cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
‘ Now,’ said he, ‘ will you climb the top of
Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you—the Master, Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all.’

So home I went, but could not sleep for
joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o’er and o’er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarm’d in the golden present, such a voice

The
Gardener's
Daughter

Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal
The sliding season : all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odours on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall
nor storm

Could keep me from the Eden where she
dwelt.

Light pretexts drew me ; sometimes a Dutch
love

For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms ; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and
more

A word could bring the colour to my cheek ;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd :
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;
And each in passing touch'd with some new
grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an
hour

The
Gardener's
Daughter

For Eustace, when I heard his deep, 'I will,'
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose
up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them
clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time we
play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, lisping, 'I am thine.'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,

The
Gardener's
Daughter

Merged in completion? Would you learn at
full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad
eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows
went by,

And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have
end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than
each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not
tell

Of difference, reconcilment, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of
vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met

Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
 Night slid down one long stream of sighing
 wind,

The
 Gardener's
 Daughter

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been
 intent

On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds
 May not be dwelt on by the common day.

This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy
 soul;

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the
 time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,

My first, last love; the idol of my youth,

The darling of my manhood, and, alas!

Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
 William and Dora. William was his son,
 And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
 And often thought, 'I'll make them man and
 wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
 And yearn'd toward William; but the youth,
 because

He had been always with her in the house,
 Thought not of Dora.

Dora

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son :
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die :
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter : he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years.' But William answer'd short ;
'I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :
'You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to 't ;
Consider : take a month to think, and give
An answer to my wish ; or by the Lord
That made me, you shall pack, and nevermore
Darken my doors again.' And William heard,
And answer'd something madly ; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her ; and his ways were
harsh ;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields ;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan
call'd

His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ; Dora
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
' It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change ! '

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William ; then distresses came on him ;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said,

' I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you :
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not ; for none of all his men

Dora Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work
And came and said, ' Where were you yester-
day ?

Whose child is that ? What are you doing
here ? '

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's child ! '
' And did I not, ' said Allan, ' did I not
Forbid you, Dora ? ' Dora said again :
' Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that 's gone ! '
And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you !
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more. '

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers
fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her
head,

Remembering the day when first she came, Dora
And all the things that had been. She bow'd
down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.'

Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;
And I will beg of him to take thee back :
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch : they peep'd and
saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd
out

And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.

Dora Then they came in : but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her,
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :
 ‘ O Father !—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child ; but now I come
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men ; for I ask’d him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me ;
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.
“ God bless him ! ” he said, “ and may he never
 know
The troubles I have gone thro’ ! ” Then he
 turn’d
His face and pass’d—unhappy that I am !
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to
 slight
His father’s memory ; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.’
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—
 ‘ I have been to blame—to blame. I have
 kill’d my son.
I have kill’d him—but I loved him—my dear
 son.
May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.’
 Then they clung about
The old man’s neck, and kiss’d him many
 times.

And all the man was broken with remorse ;
 And all his love came back a hundredfold ;
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's
 child,
 Thinking of William.

Audley
Court

So those four abode
 Within one house together ; and as years
 Went forward, Mary took another mate ;
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not
 a room
 For love or money. Let us picnic there
 At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast
 Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,
 To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
 To Francis just alighted from the boat,
 And breathing of the sea. 'With all my
 heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the
 swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach
 To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
 The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
 The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all
 The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,

Audley
Court And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and
hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret, lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yokes
Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew ; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over ; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall :
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it
was

This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd the
farm,

The four-field system, and the price of grain ;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud ;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and
sang—

‘ Oh ! who would fight and march and
countermarch,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

‘ Oh ! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

‘ Who ’d serve the state ? for if I carved my
name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands ;
The sea wastes all : but let me live my life.

‘ Oh ! who would love ? I woo’d a woman
once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn’d from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea ; but let me live my life.’

He sang his song, and I replied with mine :
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock’d down to me, when old Sir Robert’s
pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and
this—

I set the words, and added names I knew.

‘ Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of
me,

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister’s arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

‘ Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia’s arm,
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

‘ Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her
breast,

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her
lip,

I go to-night : I come to-morrow morn.

‘ I go, but I return : I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Audley Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.
 Court So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
 The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,
 My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,
 And in the fallow leisure of my life,
 Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose
 And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just
 In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
 Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
 The limit of the hills ; and as we sank
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
 The town was hush'd beneath us : lower down
 The bay was oily calm ; the harbour-buoy,
 With one green sparkle ever and anon
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the
 meadows look
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,
 The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
 Is yon plantation where this byway joins
 The turnpike ?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by ?

James. The mail ? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now ?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see ?

No, not the County Member's with the vane : Walking
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half to the
A score of gables. Mail

James. That? Sir Edward Head's :
But he's abroad : the place is to be sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his
face

From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life—
That keeps us all in order more or less—
And sick of home went overseas for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here and
there.

But let him go ; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man—on Monday,
was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow ; half stands
up

And bristles ; half has fall'n and made a bridge ;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—
Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—

Delicto : but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat : no servant stay'd :
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff ; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,

Walking
to the
Mail

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him,
'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says
the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among the
beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

John. He left *his* wife behind; for so I
heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady
once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten years
back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:

A body slight and round, and like a pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin

As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they
that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,

Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and
pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they
say.

Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;

Which are indeed the manners of the great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill that ^{Walking} ^{to the} ^{Mail}
 past,
 And fear of change at home, that drove him
 hence.

James. That was the last drop in the cup of
 gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought
 A Chartist pike. You should have seen him
 wince

As from a venomous thing : he thought himself
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry
 Should break his sleep by night, and his nice
 eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir, you
 know

That these two parties still divide the world—
 Of those that want, and those that have : and
 still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age
 With much the same result. Now I myself,
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
 Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school—a college in the South :
 There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his fruit,
 His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for *us* ;
 We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
 With meditative grunts of much content,
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
 By night we dragg'd her to the college tower
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew
 stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning
 sow,

Walking
to the
Mail

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved,
As one by one we took them—but for this—
As never sow was higher in this world—
Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

John. They found you out ?

James.

Not they.

John.

Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man ?
His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who
are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or
whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail : and here it comes
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
 Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of
 prayer,

St.
 Simeon
 Stylites

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and
 cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet,
 and snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed
 Thou would'st have caught me up into thy rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the
 palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not
 breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that
 crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

St.
Simeon
Stylites

O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then ;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh—
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know.
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew,
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the
stone,

Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

St.
Simeon
Stylites

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than
this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to
thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountain side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay

Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones,

Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and
twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and some-
times

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those that
came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live.

And they say then that I work'd miracles,

Where-of my fame is loud amongst mankind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O
God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.

Have mercy, mercy ! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high

Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;

St.
Simeon
Stylites

And twice three years I crouch'd on one that
rose

Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
'Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages !' then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are
choked.

But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the
saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome
food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have
stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred
times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints ;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet

With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling
frost. St.
Simeon
Stylites

I wear an undress'd goat-skin on my back ;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me ? Ha !
ha !

They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this ?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what
of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine ; but what of
that ?

Yet do not rise : for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd ?
I think you know I have some power with
Heaven

St. Simeon Stylites From my long penance : let him speak his wish.
 Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth
 from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark !
 they shout

'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
 Can I work miracles and not be saved ?
 This is not told of any. They were saints.
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold
 a saint !'

And lower voices saint me from above.
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
 Spreads more and more and more, that God
 hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
 Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,
 The watcher on the column till the end ;
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
 From my high nest of penance here proclaim
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
 A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my
 sleeve ;
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.

I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd
again. St.
Simeon
Stylites

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my
chest.

They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with
thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow
steps—

With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding
pain—

Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!

St.
Simeon
Stylites

Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a
shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother,
come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it.
Christ!

'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the
crown!

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frank-
incense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for
Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;
 Once more before my face
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
 That stand within the chace.

The
 Talking
 Oak

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
 Beneath its drift of smoke ;
 And ah ! with what delighted eyes
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,
 Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field
 I spoke without restraint,
 And with a larger faith appeal'd
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
 And told him of my choice,
 Until he plagiarised a heart,
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
 None else could understand ;
 I found him garrulously given,
 A babbler in the land.

The
Talking
Oak

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour ;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift :

'And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five ;

' And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork :

' The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays :

' And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In tea-cup times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn ;

' And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modest Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

' I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all ;

' For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago ;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

' From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

The
Talking
Oak

‘ I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
 (And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho’ I circle in the grain
 Five hundred rings of years—

‘ Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
 Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
 So light upon the grass :

‘ For as to fairies, that will flit
 To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
 But far too spare of flesh.’

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
 And overlook the chace ;
And from thy topmost branch discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
 That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
 To sport beneath thy boughs.

‘ O yesterday, you know, the fair
 Was holden at the town ;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
 And rode his hunter down.

‘ And with him Albert came on his.
 I look’d at him with joy :
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
 So seems she to the boy.

' An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

' But, as for her, she staid at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come
She look'd with discontent.

' She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut :
She could not please herself.

' Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

' A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

' But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

' And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my "giant bole ;"

The
Talking
Oak

‘ And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

‘ I wish’d myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock’d her hands.

‘ Yet seem’d the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine’s fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.’

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

‘ O yes, she wander’d round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss’d the name she found,
And sweetly murmur’d thine.

‘ A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

The
Talking
Oak

‘ Then flush’d her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss’d me once again.

‘ Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr’d :

‘ And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern’d,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn’d.

‘ Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet’s waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden’s tender palm.

‘ I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

‘ For ah ! the Dryad-days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

‘ But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck’d and gather’d into one
The life that spreads in them,

The
Talking
Oak

‘She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro’,
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.’

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

‘’Tis little more : the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

‘Her eyelids dropp’d their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro’ all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix’d with sighs.

‘I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull’d them in my own.

‘Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second flutter’d round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

‘ A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ancle fine.

‘ Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow’d all her rest—
Dropt dew upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

‘ But in a pet she started up,
And pluck’d it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

‘ And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

‘ I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

‘ O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.’

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro’ the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

The
Talking
Oak

This fruit of thine by Love is blest
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
All throats that gurgle sweet !
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes !
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes !

The
Talking
Oak

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke ;
And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY

Love and Duty OF love that never found his earthly close,
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking
 hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
 Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout
 For some blind glimpse of freedom work
 itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
 System and empire? Sin itself be found
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become
 Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
 Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
 The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
 O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
 Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy
 years,

The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
 Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will
 bring

The drooping flower of knowledge changed to
 fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
 And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill for Love and
good? Duty

Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.

—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so
slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears, would
dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—
came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :
Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.
Could Love part thus? was it not well to
speak,

Love and Duty To have spoken once? It could not but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way

To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night, that
paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves
to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all

Love and
Duty

Life needs for life is possible to will—
 Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by
 My blessing ! should my shadow cross thy
 thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, so put it back
 For calmer hours in memory's darkest hold,
 If unforgotten ! should it cross thy dreams,
 O might it come like one that looks content,
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
 And point thee forward to a distant light,
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
 And leave thee freër, till thou wake refresh'd
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath
 grown

Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of
 pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

ULYSSES

IT little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
 me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

Ulysses

That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met ;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin
 fades

For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on
 life

Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains : but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 Lo whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail

Ulysses

In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old:
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs:
the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and, sitting well in order, smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are,
we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL

Locksley Hall COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet
'tis early morn :

Leave me here, and when you want me, sound
upon the bugle horn.

'Tis the place, and round the gables, as of old,
the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over
Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks
the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into
cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere
I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to
the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the
mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a
silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing
a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long
result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful **Locksley**
land reposed ; **Hall**
When I clung to all the present for the promise
that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye
could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the
robin's breast ;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself
another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the
burnish'd dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns
to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than
should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute
observance hung.

And I said, ' My cousin Amy, speak, and speak
the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being
sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour
and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
northern night.

Locksley And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a
Hall sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of
hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they
should do me wrong ;'
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin ?' weeping,
'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it
in his glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on
all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd
in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear
the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the
fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch
the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching
of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy,
mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren,
barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Locksley
Hall

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known
me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower
heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level
day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to
sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated
with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight
to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have
spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer
than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not
they are glazed with wine.
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his
hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is
overwrought :
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him
with thy lighter thought.

Locksley He will answer to the purpose, easy things to
Hall understand—

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew
thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a
last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the
strength of youth !
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the
living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule !
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd
forehead of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst
thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more
than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which
bears but bitter fruit ?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart
be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length
of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records **Locksley**
of the mind? **Hall**

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as
I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she
speak and move :

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at
was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for
the love she bore?

No—she never loved me truly : love is love
for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is
truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remember-
ing happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy
heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain
is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art
staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the
shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to
his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears
that thou wilt weep.

Locksley
Hall

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd
by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing
of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient
kindness on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee
to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a
tender voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival
brings thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from
the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a
dearness not his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy
of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down
a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she
herself was not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy
self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore Locksley
Hall
should I care?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither
by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting
upon days like these?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but
to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the
markets overflow.

I have but an angry fancy: what is that which
I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the
foeman's ground,

When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the
winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt
that Honour feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at
each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that
earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou
wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life;

Locksley Yearning for the large excitement that the
Hall coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his
 father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and
 nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like
 a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
 before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among
 the throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reap-
 ing something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the
 things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye
 could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
 that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies
 of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
 with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there
 rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the
 central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south- Locksley
wind rushing warm, Hall
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro'
the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the
battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a
fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in
universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro'
me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me
with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here
are out of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on
from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creep-
ing nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the
process of the suns.

Locksley What is that to him that reaps not harvest of
Hall his youthful joys,
 Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever
 like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I
 linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is
 more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he
 bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the
 stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on
 the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target
 for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
 moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved
 so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's
 pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in
 a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,
 match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water
 unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Locksley
Ah, for some retreat Hall
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life
began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father
evil-starr'd ;
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish
uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander
far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of
the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons
and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,
knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European
flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops
the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the
heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple
spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than
in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts
that shake mankind.

Locksley There the passion cramp'd no longer shall have
Hall scope and breathing space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear
my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive,
and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their
lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the
rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know*
my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast
with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were
sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish
one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like
Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, Locksley
forward let us range. Hall

Let the peoples spin for ever down the ringing
grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into
the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of
Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as
when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the
lightnings, weigh the Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath
not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my
fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to
Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me
the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening
over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail,
or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward,
and I go.

GODIVA

Godiva *I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people
well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay, we
starve !'

She sought her lord, and found him, where he
strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they
starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
'You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?'—'But I would die,' said
she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear,

‘ Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! ’ — ‘ Alas ! ’ she said, Godiva
‘ But prove me what it is I would not do.’
And from a heart as rough as Esau’s hand,
He answer’d, ‘ Ride you naked thro’ the town,
And I repeal it ; ’ and nodding, as in scorn, ^{Ed.}
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bad him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition ; but that she would loose
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the
street,

No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window
barr’d.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp’d the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl’s gift ; but ever at a breath
She linger’d, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
And shower’d the rippled ringlets to her knee ;
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach’d
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon’d with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :
The deep air listen’d round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth’d heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur

Godiva Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's foot-fall
shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their
will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who
wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at
once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the shame-
less noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred
towers,

One after one : but even then she gain'd
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and
crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES

The Two
Voices

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast.'

The Two
Voices

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
' Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

' This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

' Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres ? '

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
' Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall :
' No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
' Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

' Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ? '

I would have said, ' Thou canst not know,'
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
' Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

‘Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.’

I said, ‘The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

‘Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Ev’n yet.’ But he : ‘What drug can make
A wither’d palsy cease to shake ?’

I wept, ‘Tho’ I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

‘And men, thro’ novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.’

‘Yet,’ said the secret voice, ‘some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

‘Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven’s starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

‘Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.’

I said that ‘all the years invent ;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

The Two
Voices

‘Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho’ watching from a ruin’d tower
How grows the day of human power?’

‘The highest-mounted mind,’ he said,
‘Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

‘Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?’

‘Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?’

‘Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream’d not yet.

‘Thou hast not gain’d a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

‘’Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

‘Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign’d,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.’

I said, ‘When I am gone away,
“He dared not tarry,” men will say,
Doing dishonour to my clay.’

‘This is more vile,’ he made reply,
‘To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

‘Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

‘Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

‘The memory of the wither’d leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner’d Autumn-sheaf.

‘Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill’d with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.’

‘Hard task, to pluck resolve,’ I cried,
‘From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

‘Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm’d me in the days
While still I yearn’d for human praise.

‘When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash’d and rung.

‘I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish’d without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

The Two
Voices

‘Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

‘Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

‘As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

‘To search thro’ all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law :

‘At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

‘To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

‘In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour’d, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

‘Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil’d with noble dust, he hears
His country’s war-song thrill his ears :

‘Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman’s line is broke,
And all the war is roll’d in smoke.’

‘Yea!’ said the voice, ‘thy dream was good,’ The Two
Voices
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

‘If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

‘Then comes the check, the change, the fall.
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

‘Yet hadst thou, thro’ enduring pain,
Link’d month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

‘Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labour little-worth.

‘That men with knowledge merely play’d,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho’ scaling slow from grade to grade;

‘Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

‘For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

‘Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

The Two
Voices

‘Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense clouds from base to cope.

‘Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

‘I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

‘If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know’st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

‘And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

‘Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all.’

‘O dull, one-sided voice,’ said I,
‘Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

‘I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

‘I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

The Two
Voices

‘ Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

‘ But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev’n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

‘ Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

‘ He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho’ cursed and scorn’d, and bruised with
stones :

‘ But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray’d, and from a happy place
God’s glory smote him on the face.’

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
‘ Not that the grounds of hope were fix’d,
The elements were kindlier mix’d.’

I said, ‘ I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

‘ And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

‘ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix’d and froz’n to permanence ;

The Two
Voices

‘For I go, weak from suffering here :
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?’

‘Consider well,’ the voice replied,
‘His face, that two hours since hath died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?’

‘Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

‘His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express’d
But long disquiet merged in rest.

‘His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho’ one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

‘His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss’d, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—

‘His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

‘He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

‘High up the vapours fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him.’

The Two
Voices

‘If all be dark, vague voice,’ I said,
‘These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

‘The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

‘I found him when my years were few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

‘From grave to grave the shadow crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
Touch’d by his feet the daisy slept.

‘The simple senses crown’d his head :
“Omega ! thou art Lord,” they said,
“We find no motion in the dead.”

‘Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

‘Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense ?

‘He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

‘Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

The Two
Voices

‘ That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

‘ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

‘ The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

‘ He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

‘ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

‘ Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

‘ But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

‘ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.’

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

The Two
Voices

‘Where wert thou when thy father play’d
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?’

‘A merry boy they call’d him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

‘Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

‘Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

‘A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth !’

‘These words,’ I said, ‘are like the rest ;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast :

‘But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end ;

‘Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

‘I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe’er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

The Two
Voices

‘It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

‘As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro’ from state to state.

‘As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

‘So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

‘But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

‘Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night ;

‘Or if thro’ lower lives I came—
Tho’ all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

‘I might forget my weaker lot ;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not.

‘And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind,

The Two
Voices

‘Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory :

‘For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime ?

‘Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

‘Of something felt, like something here ;
Of something done, I know not where ;
Such as no language may declare.’

The still voice laugh’d. ‘I talk,’ said he,
‘Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.’

‘But thou,’ said I, ‘hast missed thy mark,
Who sought’st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

‘Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new ?

‘Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long’d for death.

‘’Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that I want.’

The Two
Voices

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

The Two
Voices

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes.

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried.
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

The Day-
Dream

I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong ;

So variously seem'd all things wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, ' Rejoice ! Rejoice ! '

1833.

THE DAY-DREAM

PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :
A pleasant hour has pass'd away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
So take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place
And order'd words asunder fly.

The
Sleeping
Palace

THE SLEEPING PALACE

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,

The
Sleeping
Palace

Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;
The page has caught her hand in his :
Her lips are sever'd as to speak :
His own are pouted to a kiss :
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood ;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

The
Sleeping
Beauty

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Year after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever ; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright :
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.

The
Arrival

The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmèd heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching in the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The colour flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;

For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices in his ear.

The
Arrival

More close and close his footsteps wind :
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

THE REVIVAL

A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt,
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks.
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,

The
Revival

The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap.'
 The barons swore, with many words,
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
 My joints are something stiff or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 I mention'd half an hour ago?'
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words return'd reply:
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the question by.

 THE DEPARTURE

And on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old:

The
Departure

Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss ;'
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

'A hundred summers ! can it be ?
And whither goest thou, tell me where ?'
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL

Moral So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair.
 Oh, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose?

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
 According as his humours lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

 L'ENVOI

You shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men;
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again;

L'Envoi

To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,

The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers ;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes ;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake !
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care ;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there :
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;

L'Envoi Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter world.

For since the time when Adam first
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes?
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?
 Where on the double rosebud droops
 The fulness of the pensive mind;
 The pensive mind that, self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And, if you find a meaning there,
 O whisper to your glass, and say,
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fair?'
 What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your delight
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?

Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

Amphion

AMPHION

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren :
Yet say the neighbours when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;

Amphion

Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches ;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden swang her fragrant hair,
The bramble cast her berry,
The gin within the juniper
Began to make him merry.
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

Amphion

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended ;
And shepherds from the mountain eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure ;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !
And make her dance attendance ;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhou roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle ;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,
The modern Muses reading.

Amphion They read Botanic Treatises,
 And Works on Gardening thro' there,
 And Methods of transplanting trees
 To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
 From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
 And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
 Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
 The poor things look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
 That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
 Besides its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
 And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
 To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
 I will not vex my bosom,
Enough if at the end of all
 A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE

I

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon :
 My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
 May my soul follow soon !
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord :
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

St. Agnes'
 Eve

II

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
 To yonder shining ground ;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round ;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee ;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be.
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

Sir
Galahad

III

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD

I

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

II

Sir
Galahad

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

III

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

IV

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
I float till all is dark.

Sir
Galahad

A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the holy Grail :
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

v

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

vi

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear ;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;

And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

Sir
Galahad

VII

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
'O just and faithful knight of God !
Ride on ! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
'And have you lost your heart ?' she said ;
'And are you married yet, Edward Gray ?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :
Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

Edward Gray 'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will :
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said !
Cruelly came they back to-day :
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair :
I repent me of all I did :
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;
And here the heart of Edward Gray !"

'Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree ;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone :
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !
And there the heart of Edward Gray !'

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Like Hezekiah's, backward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
 If old things, there are new ;
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
 Yet glimpses of the true.
 Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,
 As on this whirligig of Time
 We circle with the seasons.

Will
 Water-
 proof's
 Lyrical
 Monologue

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
 With fair horizons bound :
 This whole wide earth of light and shade
 Comes out a perfect round.
 High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And set in Heaven's third story,
 I look at all things as they are,
 But thro' a kind of glory.

* * * *

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
 Half-mused or reeling ripe,
 The pint, you brought me, was the best
 That ever came from pipe.
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
 Is there some magic in the place ?
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,

Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach

Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
With motion less or greater ;
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

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Will
Water.
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

But whither would my fancy go?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks!
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
Into the common day?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
And thrumming on the table:

Half-fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task;
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask:
For I had hope, by something rare
To prove myself a poet:
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !

We know not what we know.

But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone ;

'Tis gone, and let it go.

'Tis gone : a thousand such have slept

Away from my embraces,

And fall'n into the dusty crypt

Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went

Long since, and came no more ;

With peals of genial clamour sent

From many a tavern-door,

With twisted quirks and happy hits,

From misty men of letters ;

The tavern-hours of mighty wits—

Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks

Had yet their native glow :

Nor yet the fear of little books

Had made him talk for show ;

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,

He flash'd his random speeches,

Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd

His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,

Like all good things on earth !

For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,

At half thy real worth ?

I hold it good, good things should pass :

With time I will not quarrel :

It is but yonder empty glass

That makes me maudlin-moral.

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Will
Water-
proof's
Lyrical
Monologue

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part : I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots :
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots :
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot ;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot ;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies ;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes :
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease Lady Clare
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more ;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven :
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :
Lovers long-betrothed were they :
They two will wed the morrow morn :
God's blessing on the day !

'He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went from thee ?'
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

Lady Clare 'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,
'That all comes round so just and fair :
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
'I speak the truth: you are my child.'

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast ;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread !
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the broach of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said, 'Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man.'

‘Nay now, what faith,’ said Alice the nurse, Lady Clare
‘The man will cleave unto his right.’
‘And he shall have it,’ the lady replied,
‘Tho’ I should die to-night.’

‘Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !
Alas, my child, I sinn’d for thee.’
‘O mother, mother, mother,’ she said,
‘So strange it seems to me.

‘Yet here’s a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.’

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare :
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden’s hand,
And follow’d her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower ;
‘O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth ?’

‘If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born,’ she said,
‘And not the Lady Clare.’

Lady Clare ‘Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,
 ‘For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,’ said Lord Ronald,
 ‘Your riddle is hard to read.’

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She look’d into Lord Ronald’s eyes,
And told him all her nurse’s tale.

He laugh’d a laugh of merry scorn:
He turn’d, and kiss’d her where she stood:
‘If you are not the heiress born,
And I,’ said he, ‘the next in blood—

‘If you are not the heiress born,
And I,’ said he, ‘the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.’

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
‘If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch’d thee daily,
And I think thou lov’st me well.’
She replies, in accents fainter,
‘There is none I love like thee.’
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.

The
Lord of
Burleigh

He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof :
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
'I can make no marriage present :
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life.'
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand :
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
'Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer ;
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns

The
Lord of
Burleigh

With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before :
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
' All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirits sank ;
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.

The
Lord of
Burleigh

But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burden of an honour
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me !'
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
'Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed.'
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again

Sir
Launcelot
and Queen
Guinevere

The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some twinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet,
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
And fleetly now she skimm'd the plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

Sir
Launcelot
and Queen
Guinevere

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

The
Beggar
Maid

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can say :
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way :
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

THE VISION OF SIN

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.

He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown, The Vision of Sin

But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and
capes—

Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles
of grapes.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;
Till thronging in and in, to where they
waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and
palpitated ;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,

The
Vision
of Sin

Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round :
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing
near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded : and I thought I would have
spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was
broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

The
Vision
of Sin

‘ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way :
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

‘ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

‘ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

‘ I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

‘ Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

The
Vision
of Sin

‘ Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee,
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

‘ Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

‘ Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

‘ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

‘ We are men of ruin’d blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

‘ Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Thro’ the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied by the hands of fools.

‘ Friendship !—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

‘Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

‘O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour’s wife.

‘Fill the cup, and fill the can :
• Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

‘Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill’d with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

‘He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant’s power ;
And the tyrant’s cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

‘Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

‘Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

The
Vision
of Sin

‘No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

‘Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

‘Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

‘Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

‘Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

‘Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

‘Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

The
Vision
of Sin

‘ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

‘ Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

‘ You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell’d on a skull.

‘ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

‘ No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

‘ Lo ! God’s likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modell’d, glazed, nor framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

‘ Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

The
Vision
of Sin

‘Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

‘Youthful hopes, by scores to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl’d ;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

‘Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn.’

The voice grew faint : there came a further
change :

Again uprose the mystic mountain-range :
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch’d with moss.
Then some one spake : ‘Behold ! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with
time.’

Another said : ‘The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.’
And one : ‘He had not wholly quench’d his
power ;

A little grain of conscience made him sour.’
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, ‘Is there any hope ?’

To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
 But in a tongue no man could understand ;
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

The
 Skipping-
 Rope

THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was Antelope
 Could skip so lightly by.
 Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
 Will hit you in the eye.
 How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !
 How fairy-like you fly !
 Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—
 I hate that silly sigh.
 Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
 Or tell me how to die.
 There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
 And hang yourself thereby.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
 Yon orange sunset waning slow :
 From fringes of the faded eve,
 O, happy planet, eastward go ;
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise
 To glass herself in dewy eyes
 That watch me from the glen below.

Break,
Break,
Break

Ah, bear me with thee, lightly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street ;
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,

And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The Poet's
Song

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his
beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung
many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.'

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EDITORIAL APPENDIX

'Not die but live a life of purest breath. This is the central idea, the holy power of love.'—TENNYSON.

'As he said himself, "This poem is a little Hamlet," the history of a morbid poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir of madness, an egotist with the makings of a cynic, raised to sanity by a pure and holy love which elevates his whole nature, passing from the height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery, driven into madness by the loss of her whom he has loved, and, when he has at length passed through the fiery furnace, and has recovered his reason, gives himself up to work for the good of mankind through the unselfishness born of his great passion.'

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON :

A MEMOIR BY HIS SON,

Vol. i. p. 396.

'I can now see, and I at once confess, that a feeling, which had reference to the growth of the war-spirit in the outer world at the date of this article (Quarterly Review, 1855), dislocated my frame of mind, and disabled me from dealing even tolerably with the work as a work of imagination.'—W. E. GLADSTONE.

The Text.

The present collection, the last of three volumes in which is included so much of Tennyson's work (except his share in the *Poems by Two Brothers*) as appeared up to October 1857, contains the following :—(i.) *Maud, and other Poems* ; (ii.) *Poems*, 1842.

1. *Maud*, etc.

The poem was published in a volume which appeared in 1855 with the following title :—

MAUD AND OTHER POEMS | BY | ALFRED TENNYSON, D.C.L., | POET LAUREATE. | LONDON : | EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET | 1855.

Maud on its first appearance was greeted with hostile criticism on almost all sides, though it remained the poet's 'pet bantling' to the end. Dr. Mann's *Maud Vindicated* (1855) was especially acceptable to the poet,¹ and the recently published *Memoir* contains a strikingly valuable extract from the work, giving the substance of Tennyson's own explanation of the course of the drama, or 'monodramatic lyric,' as the poem may well be termed.² 'It is a "Drama of the Soul,"' writes the author of the *Memoir*, 'set in a landscape glorified by Love,'

¹ He was particularly obliged to Dr. Mann for defending him against 'the egregiously nonsensical imputation' of having attacked the Quakers and Mr. Bright. Among the defenders of the poem was the author of *Ionica*, with some fine lines, entitled 'After reading "Maud," September 1855.' 'A Poet of the People' published an *Anti-Maud* (second edition, enlarged, 1856); cp. *Tennysonianana*, p. 123.

² Cp. *Memoir*, vol. i. p. 394-5; the poet's reading of *Maud* seems to have been its finest commentary. 'I shall never forget his last reading of *Maud* on August 24th, 1892. . . . His voice low and calm in everyday life, capable of delicate manifold inflection, but with "organ-tones" of great power and range, thoroughly brought out the drama of the poem.'

and according to Lowell, 'the antiphonal voice to "*In Memoriam*."'

The critics of *Maud* seem to have missed the dramatic aspect of the poem, and identified the poet with the hero of the piece. The novelty of the method must be taken into account. 'No other poem (a monotone with plenty of change and no weariness),' said Tennyson, 'has been made into a drama where successive phases of passion in one person take the place of successive persons.' He thought that the poem, originally called *Maud*, or *the Madness*, has been partly misunderstood owing to a misconception of the story, and left behind certain ms. headings and notes, thus :—

PART I.—I. Before the arrival of Maud. II. First sight of Maud. III. Visions of the night. IV. Mood of bitterness after fancied disdain. V. He fights against his growing passion. VI. First interview with Maud. VII. He remembers his own and her father talking just before the birth of Maud. VIII. That she did not return his love. IX. First sight of the young lord. XII. Interview with Maud. XIII. Mainly prophetic: he sees Maud's brother, who will not recognise him. XVI. He will declare his love. XVII. Accepted. XVIII. Happy. XXI. Before the ball. XXII. In the Hall garden.

PART II.—I. The Phantom (after the duel with Maud's brother). II. In Brittany. III. He felt himself going mad. IV. Haunted after Maud's death.

['O that 'twere possible' appeared first in the *Keepsake*. Sir John Simeon, years after, begged me to weave a story round this poem, and so 'Maud' came into being.]

v. In the madhouse.

(The second corpse is Maud's brother, the lover's father being the first corpse, whom the lover thinks that Maud's father has murdered.)

PART III.—Sane but shattered. Written when the cannon was heard booming from the battleships in the Solent before the Crimean War.

The 'other poems' are :—'The Brook: an Idyl,' 'The Letters,' 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,' 'The Daisy,' written at Edinburgh, 'To the Rev. F. D. Maurice,' 'Will,' 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'

A new edition appeared in 1856, and forms the basis of the text of the present issue. The only variant in *Maud* worth indicating here is the expansion of the first section by stanzas 14-16, which first appeared in the 1856 edition.

The division into two, and finally into three, parts is of still later date.

The 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington' had previously been published in separate form in 1852. As it appears in the *Maud* volume, there are considerable differences from the original draft, a reprint of which may be found in Mr. Ernest Rhys's *Tennyson Lyrics*.

The 'Charge of the Light Brigade' first appeared in the *Examiner* of December 9, 1854, and was incorporated in the *Maud* volume in the following year. In August 1855 appeared the final version, which is followed in the second edition of *Maud, and other Poems* (1856), and in all later editions.

2. The Poems of 1842.

In 1842 Tennyson published two volumes of verse, one of which was almost entirely a selection from his two earlier collections, whilst the other comprised quite new poems. The text of the present edition is that of this second volume, together with a few new pieces that appeared in the first volume at the end of the early poems.

For a fairly comprehensive account of the *lectiones variæ* the reader must be referred to Mr. Shepherd's volume of *Tennysoniana* (Pickering, 1879), where the poems are treated in detail.

It should be noted, however, that in the case of two poems, viz. 'Walking to the Mail' and 'Lady Clare,' the text is that of the eighth edition (1853). The former poem originally opened thus:—

'John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the country
looks !

Is yonder planting where this byway joins
The turnpike ?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by ?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see

Beyond the water mills?

James. Sir Edward Head's:

But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.'

And there are one or two other changes in the body of the piece.

'Lady Clare' originally began thus:—

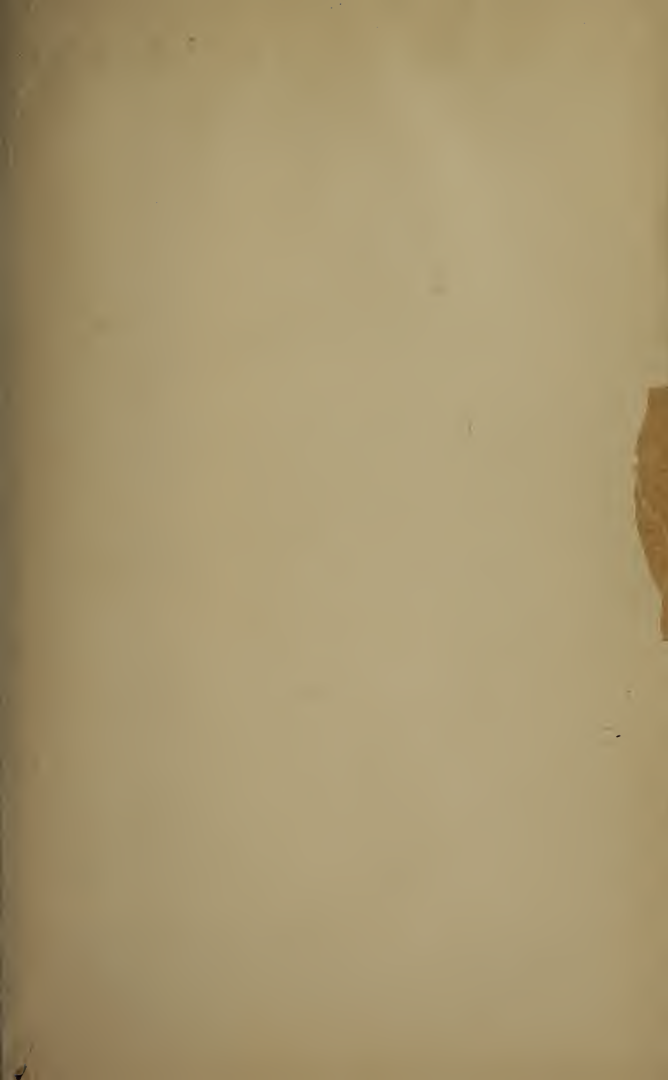
'Lord Ronald courted Lady Clare,
I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lord Ronald, her cousin, courted her,
And they will wed the morrow morn.'

The stanza which now stands sixteenth, 'The lily-white doe, etc.,' was added in 1851.

A note appended to the edition of 1842 (and to that of 1843) says:—'The Idyl of "Dora" was partly suggested by one of Miss Mitford's pastorals ["Dora Cresswell" in *Our Village*], and the ballad of "Lady Clare" by the novel of *Inheritance* [Susan Ferrier].'

I. G.

January 15, 1900.



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